

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

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R 130300 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8554

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4002

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY POST- CEASEFIRE SITUATION REPORT, 6-12 MARCH 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM CAN THO DTD MAR 12, RPTD TO YOU
FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0032

1. SUMMARY: WITH THE CEASEFIRE NOW ENTERING ITS SECOND MONTH,
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THE VC/ NVA SOUGHT TO REMIND THE GVN AND DELTA POPULATION
THAT THEY RETAIN A STRONG MILITARY CAPABILITY. THEY DID SO

SUCCESSFULLY IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA, BUT TO DATE HAVE FAILED TO ROLL BACK RFNAF ADVANCES AGAINST BASE AREAS IN THE NORTHERN DELTA. CEASEFIRE ENFORCEMENT CONTINUES TO BE MOST UNEVEN.

THE JMC SUFFERS FROM TERMINAL BIRTH PANGS. THE ICCS IN REGION VII, DESPITE INEPT BUT SEEMINGLY WELL INTENTIONED HUNGARIAN LEADERSHIP DURING THE WEEK, CONTINUES TO WORK MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOR. GVN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION CONTINUED. WITH DEMOCRACY PARTY CHAPTERS INAUGURATED IN ALMOST ALL PROVINCES AND POPULAR FRONTS IN ALL, ACTIVITY WAS LESS FLAMBOYANT THAN DURING THE PREVIOUS WEEK.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: THE POST- CEASEFIRE SITUATION IN MR IV DURING THE PAST WEEK WAS DOMINATED BY A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN VC/ NVA MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE VC/ NVA CONTINUED THEIR DRIVE IN SOUTHERN CHUONG THIEN, REACTED FORCEFULLY TO RVNAF INITIATIVES IN DINH TUONG, MAINTAINED PRESSURE IN THE CAMBODIAN BORDER AREA OF CHAU DOC, AND STRUCK RVNAF POSITIONS IN BA XUYEN AND BAC LIEU. ALTHOUGH AT A LOWER LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, VIET CONG- INITIATED POLITICAL VIOLENCE - ABDUCTIONS AND SABOTAGE - INCREASED IN THE ABOVE MENTIONED PROVINCES. AS THE WEEK CLOSED, RVNAF WAS MORE THAN HOLDING ITS OWN IN DINH TUONG BUT ITS CONTROL OF SOUTHERN CHUONG THIEN HAS PERCEPTIBLY DIMINISHED. IN THAT AREA THE VC/ NVA HAVE SUFFICIENT CONTROL TO ALLOW THEM UNIMPEDED COMMUNICATIONS, ROUTES OF SUPPLY, AND A POTENTIAL BASE FOR FUTURE MILITARY OR POLITICAL OPERATIONS IN THE CENTRAL DELTA. DESPITE A HIGHER INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE, BOTH SIDES HAD LOWER CASUALTIES FOR THE WEEK MARCH 4-10 (RVNAF 126 KIA, 525 WIA; VC/ NVA 393 KIA, 39 CIA) THAN THEY REPORTEDLY SUFFERED DURING THE PRECEDING WEEK.

3. ICCS

A. REGION VII ICCS CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM, DEPLOYING ITS LAST SUB- REGIONAL TEAM TO TRI TON AND OPENING SEVERAL MORE INVESTIGATIONS. ONE DEVICE REGION VII HAS ADOPTED TO KEEP UP THE PACE IS TO INITIATE " OBSERVATIONS" ON THE BASIS OF ORAL REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATIONS, THEN CONVERT TO " INVESTIGATIONS" WHEN THE WRITTEN REQUEST IS RECEIVED. REGION VI STILL HAS NOT DEPLOYED TO HONG NGU, NOR HAS IT CONDUCTED ANY INVESTIGATIONS. LACK OF AGGRESSIVE ICCS LEADERSHIP AND GVN JMC INITIATIVE PROBABLY ACCOUNT FOR THE MARKED CONTRAST BETWEEN REGION VI' S SLUGGISH PERFORMANCE AND THE MORE ENERGETIC STYLE OF REGION VII.

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ANOTHER FACTOR MAY BE THAT THE GVN FEELS ITS POST- CEASEFIRE ACTIONS IN REGION VI CANNOT BEAR SCRUTINY AS WELL AS IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA. THE GVN MAY THUS BE MORE RELUCTANT TO STIR THE SOMNOLENT CEASEFIRE OBSERVERS IN DINH TUONG.

B. THE FIRSTWEEK OF NON- CANADIAN REGIONAL ICCS CHAIRMANSHIP WAS SLOWER PACED MAINLY BECAUSE OF HUNGARIAN LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND THE NEED FOR DOUBLE TRANSLATION. THE HUNGARIANS MAINTAINED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, HOWEVER, AND

THEY ARE EXPECTED TO CHAIR THE COMMISSION MORE EFFICIENTLY DURING THEIR NEXT TURN.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY:

A. MILITARY: VC MILITARY ACTIVITY DURING THE WEEK APPEARED AIMED AT CONSOLIDATING GAINS IN V THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF CHUONG THIEN AND IN THE MOUNTAINS ROUND TRI TON IN CHAU DOC, MAINTAINING THE PRESSURE IN DINH TUONG, AND MAKING THE VC PRESENCE FELT IN BAC LIEU. WHILE THE EXPECTED TRI TON LAND GRAB TO GREET THE ICCS FAILED TO MATERIALIZE, THE VC/ NVA APPARENTLY STILL PLAN TO TAKE ANOTHER CRACK AT HONG NGU BEFORE THE ICCS DEPLOYS ITS ENTRY CONTROL POINT TEAM THERE. VC MILITARY ACTIVITY DURING THE WEEK SEEMED CONSISTENT WITH VC PROPAGANDA CLAIMS THAT WHILE THEY ARE PREPARING FOR THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE, THEY INTEND TO MAINTAIN A STRONG MILITARY POSITION.

B. POLITICAL: THE WEEK SAW SOME TERRORIST ACTS, BUT VC POLITICAL ACTIVITY MAINLY STRESSED PROPAGANDA THEMES URGING CEASEFIRE COMPLIANCE AND DESERTION FROM RVNAF. THERE WERE REPORTS OF CONTINUING LOCAL FRONT ORGANIZATION AND IN AT LEAST ONE CASE LOCAL " GOVERNMENT" ELECTIONS. REPORTS DURING THE WEEK GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF DIFFUSED AND PERHAPS UNCOORDINATED VC POLITICAL ACTIVITY, CERTAINLY AT A LESS FRANTIC PACE THAN GVN EFFORTS. ONE CAPTURED DOCUMENT PURPORTEDLY CALLED FOR STALLING TACTICS TO GIVE THE VC MORE TIME TO PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS.

T. GVN ACTIVITY:

A. POLITICAL: THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE DEMOCRACY PARTY WERE LESS CONSPICUOUS IN THE DELTA DURING THE WEEK AS GVN ATTENTION TURNED TO ORGANIZING THE TWO GROUPS AT THE DISTRICT AND VILLAGE LEVEL. SOME POLITICAL PARTY SALWARTS, MOST NOTABLY HOA HAO PHAM BA CAM SUPPORTERS, CRITICIZED THE PRESSURE TACTICS USED IN FORMING THE DEMOCRACY PARTY AND LINKED IT WITH DECREE LAW 60 AS EVIDENCE THAT THIEU INTENDS
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TO ELIMINATE ALL NATIONALIST POLITICAL ACTIVITY EXCEPT THAT WHICH HE CAN CONTROL. BUT THERE IS SO FAR NO SERIOUS NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION TO EITHER THE PARTY OR THE FRONT IN THE DELTA. MOST PEOPLE APPEAR TO ACCEPT THE FORMATION OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS AS A REALPOLITIK MEASURE RELATED TO THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT' S CALL FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

B. MILITARY: GENERAL NGHI, MR IV COMMANDER, PASSED ON TO PROVINCE CHIEFS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS PRESIDENT THIEU' S ORDERS URGING PROTECTION OF ICCS AND JMC MEMBERS, AND RESTRICTING MILITARY ACTIVITY TO DEFENSIVE MEASURES. ALTHOUGH THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO BE HIGH, THE NUMBER OF SECURITY OPERATIONS REPORTED BY MR IV HAS DECLINED. IN ADDITION, THE REPORTED EXPENDITURE OF ARTILLERY AMMUNITION 589,, AND THE USE OF TACTICAL AIR AND HELICOPTERS IS RUNNING WELL BELOW THE LEVELS CARRIED FOR THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF THE CEASEFIRE.

BARNES UNQUOTE
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